

here all the time. But we have a little problem: The Republicans won't let us go to conference. Maybe they will in this instance because that is what he said he wants.

So open the government and get back to the so-called conversation, as he talks about it. We will get back to the negotiating table and work out our budget disagreements. We can even start talking about ways to make the Affordable Care Act better—not worse, but better. We can get back to the business of legislating. That is what our job has always been and should be.

I would ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Vermont.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks of our distinguished majority leader. He has probably the most frustrating job there is because he has continuously brought up and passed bills to get us out of this and reopen the government, and he is blocked by the Republican leadership in the other body.

Today marks the 8th day of this unnecessary government shutdown, more than 192 hours since the world saw the doors to the United States Government closed for this embarrassing and needless shutdown. While the Republicans in the House have the ability to end this shutdown right now—before noon today—they refuse to pass the clean continuing resolution approved by the Senate.

I have joined other Senators in coming to the floor to speak about the pervasive impact of the shutdown, and there isn't a single family in Vermont or in America—Republican, Democratic, or Independent—that this shutdown hasn't affected. All these families have been affected, but now we face cascading worsening effects to come the longer this senseless shutdown continues. I have joined the chorus of voices urging the relatively few in the House of Representatives holding up this process to put an end to this political act of destruction. It might allow them to send out bumper stickers and raise money from their supporters, but it is not helping the country.

If the human toll of the impact—if a Vermonter is not able to buy a home, or children turned away from poten-

tially life-saving clinical trials, or the parents of our fallen soldiers who won't receive death benefits to pay for their funerals—and that is not an exaggeration. We have always had a program, when one of our soldiers dies overseas in combat, there are benefits established so the family can at least be there when the casket returns at Dover Air Force Base and to provide for the funeral. Even that is cut out. We send our soldiers to war. We tell them we are there to take care of their families if something happens. Now, because of a small group of tea party Republicans, we say we can't even take care of their families when they die in the service of the country. For shame if that happens.

If all of these examples don't motivate them to do the right thing, maybe I can speak their language for a moment and point to the fiscal cost of this Republican shutdown. The estimated cost per hour of the Republican shutdown—that the government remains shut down—is \$12.5 million. That is \$300 million a day wasted or nearly \$1.6 billion per week. And what do the American people get for that? They get to watch fake budget conferences, staged photo ops, and the very Members shutting down the government and running to every single TV camera they can find. Over the last 8 days we have spent more than \$2 billion for the government to not work, not function, and not serve the American people.

Can you imagine the actual good that could have been done with that \$2 billion that was just wasted? And that figure only covers the cost of work and services the government can't perform because 800,000 Federal workers are furloughed. It doesn't take into account the ripple effects throughout our overall economy.

Where are the deficit hawks who claim we don't have enough money to provide SNAP benefits to hungry Americans in the farm bill? Where are the Members who shamefully held up disaster relief after Tropical Storm Irene and Hurricane Sandy, while insisting that spending be offset? Surely, they would want to put a stop to the shutdown to end this wasteful government spending. Yet here we are, waiting for the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives to pass the clean continuing resolution and put an end to this shutdown.

Instead of passing a clean Senate-passed continuing resolution pending in the House—based on budget levels that, as the leader pointed out, Republicans themselves wanted—the proposals being offered by House Republicans would actually expand the deficit.

First, the House proposed we repeal the Affordable Care Act because of claims it is harmful to our economy. But if we repeal it, we would actually accelerate the health care cost spiral and boost the Federal deficit by \$109 billion. They don't tell people they are voting to add another \$109 billion to

our deficit. Then they suggest we repeal just a portion of the Affordable Care Act, but add \$30 billion to the deficit for which they don't want any offsets. Where were the Members in the House who attacked appropriations bills and insisted on cuts to funding for law enforcement officers, disaster preparedness, and medical research? Where were the Members who insisted the devastating costs of sequestration must remain in place because we simply can't afford to spend and must reduce the deficit, no matter what it does to law enforcement or medical research or disaster preparedness?

They ditched their principles, and now they have forced a government shutdown which is costing more than if we had stayed open because of the money wasted. It appears the only time the House is willing to compromise is when it comes to adding to the deficit in order to prevent access to affordable health insurance for millions of Americans.

We are here right now because the Republican leadership in the House refuses to act. They could end the shutdown right now and make this the last day we spend \$300 million on nothing. Yet there is this faction within the majority of the House that has now brought the government of the United States to a halt, wasting hundreds of millions of dollars each day, day after day, and they will not relent. They talk about the Affordable Care Act, which, if we have children in college, allows them to be on our insurance policy. They want to do away with that, but they don't have any alternative. The Affordable Care Act allows a member of your family with a preexisting health condition—heart, cancer, whatever—to get insurance. They want to do away with that. They have no plan of their own.

I want to get back to work for Vermonters. I want help for the Vermont company who can't start their new business because the certificate is sitting on a desk at the Department of Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau but nobody is there to sign it—I want pregnant Vermonters and new moms going without meals and whose babies are going to go hungry because they are unable to get healthy food and baby formula without the WIC benefits they are supposed to have access to—I want to see them fed. I want to see our farmers have the ability to continue to work as they do every single day and know the farm bill has been passed.

Let's stop the sloganeering here. Let's stop rushing to the TV cameras. Let's actually do what is best for America. Wouldn't that be a wonderful step in the right direction?

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for